

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services (MHDS)
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA)¹
Social Model Detoxification and Detoxification Technicians

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Social model alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs concentrate on providing psychosocial services. Social workers and other clinicians provide services such as individual and family counseling and coordination of care. Patients who need a physician's care may be referred to a nearby emergency department, which is not a cost-effective source of detoxification services.

Social model programs use a variety of approaches to detoxification, but the emphasis is most often on nonpharmacological management of withdrawal. Counselors do not have prescribing privileges and cannot legally administer medications from stock bottles to patients. In some programs, counselors can assist patients in taking maintenance medications as prescribed under NAC 449.144. The patient's medication supply must be in a container that is labeled with the patient's name and that includes instructions for taking the medication. Trained staff observes the patient take the medication, and they maintain a log. Trained staff must monitor patients' symptoms and follow agency protocols if patients become ill.

Social model programs should not provide detoxification for people who have severe dependence on alcohol or other sedative-hypnotics, as withdrawal can be life threatening in these cases. Patients must be properly medically evaluated before they enter a social model program. NAC 449.1214 requires a physical assessment by an MD, PA, NP, or RN within 24 hours to ensure that a social model detoxification program is appropriate for the client.

Social setting detoxification is referred to as Level III.2-D: Clinically-managed residential detoxification and is an organized service that may be delivered by appropriately trained staff, which provides 24-hour supervision, observation, and support for patients who are intoxicated or experiencing withdrawal. Clinically-managed residential detoxification is characterized by its emphasis on peer and social support.

Added to Nevada Administrative Code by the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (BADA), effective 4-27-94; and amended by R100-98 in 11-3-98 is the following description and qualifications for detoxification technicians.

¹ The Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services (MHDS), Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA), was previously known as the Health Division, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (BADA).

NAC 458.035 “Detoxification technician” defined. (NRS 458.028) “Detoxification technician” means a person who is certified by the bureau (BADA) to provide screening for safe withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs.

NAC 458.144 Qualifications for certification as detoxification technician. (NRS 458.025) The qualifications for certifications as a detoxification technician are:

1. Submission to the bureau (BADA) of a completed application for certification as a detoxification technician;
2. Education consisting of a minimum of a high school diploma or a certificate of general educational development;
3. Certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and
4. A passing score on an examination for certification as a detoxification technician.

The Bureau of Licensure and Certification (BLC) under the Health Division licensed facilities to provide detoxifications models. A Facility for Treatment of Abuse of Alcohol or Drugs is listed as facilities under “facilities for the dependent” under NRS 449.0045.

NRS 449.0045 Facility for Treatment of Abuse of Alcohol and Drugs is defined as *any public or private establishment which provides residential treatment, including mental and physical restoration, of abusers of alcohol or drugs and which is certified by the Health Division, pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 458.025. It does not include a medical facility or services offered by volunteers or voluntary organizations.*

NAC 449.072 “Social model detoxification program” defined. (NRS 449.037) “Social model detoxification program” means a treatment program that concentrates on providing psychosocial services and nonmedical detoxification.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Health by R077-01, eff. 10-18-2001)

NAC 449.121 Certain facilities authorized to offer program. (NRS 449.037) A social model detoxification program may be offered to clients in:

1. Residential programs that offer detoxification services;
2. A licensed facility for modified medical detoxification pursuant to [NAC 449.15311](#) to [449.15369](#), inclusive; or
3. A medically managed intensive detoxification program.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Health by R077-01, eff. 10-18-2001)

NAC 449.1214 General requirements. (NRS 449.037)

1. A facility that offers a social model detoxification program:
 - (a) Must have a physician, nurse practitioner, registered nurse or physician assistant conduct a physical assessment and a review of the general medical and drug history of a client within 24 hours after the client is admitted to the facility to ensure that a social model detoxification program is appropriate for the client.

(b) Must not provide detoxification services for clients who exhibit life-threatening symptoms of withdrawal from alcohol and drug abuse.

(c) Must develop and implement policies and procedures that protect the safety and health of clients. The facility must have these policies and procedures reviewed annually by a licensed physician who is familiar with the symptoms of withdrawal from alcohol and drug abuse.

(d) Must ensure that the observation of a client during his treatment in the social model detoxification program is reflected in the records of the client as deemed necessary by the policies and procedures of that facility.

2. The staff of a facility that offers a social model detoxification program must complete at least 6 hours of additional education in the detoxification of alcohol and drug abusers, as approved by the program of ongoing quality improvement pursuant to [NAC 449.1218](#), every 2 years. Such education must include instruction in:

(a) Acute withdrawal symptoms from alcohol and drug abuse; and

(b) First-aid procedures for clients with seizures.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Health by R077-01, eff. 10-18-2001)

NAC 449.1218 Program of ongoing quality improvement. ([NRS 449.037](#))

1. A social model detoxification program must have a program of ongoing quality improvement designed to:

(a) Monitor and evaluate, objectively and systematically, the quality and appropriateness of client care;

(b) Pursue opportunities to improve client care; and

(c) Resolve identified problems.

2. The program of ongoing quality improvement must:

(a) Establish written policies and procedures to describe and document the monitoring and evaluation activities of the program of ongoing quality improvement.

(b) Include the participation of a medical professional who is not required to be a member of the staff. For the purposes of this paragraph, “medical professional” means a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or registered nurse who is familiar with clients suffering from acute withdrawal symptoms from alcohol and drug abuse.

(c) In addition to the participation of a medical professional pursuant to paragraph (b), include the participation of the administrator and two staff members of the social model detoxification program.

(d) Approve the 6 hours of additional education required pursuant to NAC 449.1214 to ensure that the additional education is appropriate.

3. The findings of the program of ongoing quality improvement, including any conclusions, recommendations, actions taken and the results of the actions taken must be documented. All documentation must be reported to the governing body and must be reflected in the minutes annually.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Health by R077-01, eff. 10-18-2001)

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA), formerly BADA works in collaboration with the Bureau of Licensure and Certification (BLC) and requires SAPTA certified program staff to adhere to BLC regulations, including staff training.

Staff training has been provided through the SAPTA training contract with the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT) in Reno, Nevada and will be available on-line. As SAPTA is no longer housed in the Health Division, has not had requests from individuals to be certified as detoxification technicians and certifies detoxification programs in conjunction with BLC regulations, detoxification technician certification is viewed as inappropriate. Previously, the detoxification technicians' duties included the checking of vital signs. These duties are no longer allowed unless the technician also has appropriate certification or licensure under the State Board of Nursing.